



Australian Bureau of Statistics

Education Services

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Resources



GEO 14 – The Homeless

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Subject Area

Geography

Suggested Level

Years 9–11

Overview

This classroom activity explores the issue of the homeless through statistical data collected for the 2006 Census of Population and Housing and other ABS source material. Data is provided to develop a picture of homelessness across the nation with additional statistics for the homeless in the inner part of Australia's capital cities. The activity may be developed further with a film review and research.

The activity uses ABS catalogue no. 2050.0 - Australian Census Analytic Program: Counting the Homeless, 2006. The publication sought to establish the extent of homelessness in Australia at the time of the 2006 Census, using Census data complemented by data from other surveys of youth homelessness and users of support services. It provides information on the change in the size and composition of the homeless population over time, and draws on earlier research using 1996 and 2001 Census data.

The data provided in the activity may be integrated with city programs which are being undertaken by some students, programs in civics and citizenship or in human development.

Requirements

- Spreadsheet software program (optional)

Instructions

Background

Counting the Homeless

The 2001 and 2006 Census collections enumerated people are defined as primary and secondary homeless. **Primary homeless** includes all people without conventional accommodation, such as people living on the streets, in deserted buildings, improvised dwellings, in parks, etc. **Secondary homeless** includes people who move frequently from one form of temporary shelter to another. **Tertiary homeless** are people who live in boarding houses on a medium to long-term basis (13 weeks or longer).

Further detail on the Homeless in Australia may be obtained from [Australian Census Analytic Program: Counting the Homeless, 2006](#) (cat. no. 2050.0)

Geographic Units

In the Census, the smallest geographic area is a Collection District. It consists of approximately 225 households and generally represents the work of one Census collector. Collection Districts are aggregated to form larger geographic areas as part of the [Australian Standard Geographic Classification](#) (ASGC), (cat. no. 1216.0). A **Statistical Local Area (SLA)** is one of the larger geographic units and for this activity is the most appropriate way of representing the inner city area of Australia's capital cities.

6.1 What is a homeless person?

1. Use a 'think, pair and share' approach and ask students to discuss how they would describe a homeless person.
2. Use the information provided by each group to discuss the idea of a stereotype for homeless people.
3. Create a definition of a homeless person from the class responses. Compare this definition with the definitions provided in the glossary.

6.2 What are the characteristics of a homeless person?

1. Using Tables 1 – 6, divide the class into 6 groups and allocate one table per group.
2. Ask the students to study the data provided in their table and to identify **two** key points that they will share with the rest of the class.

TABLE 1: PERSONS IN DIFFERENT SECTORS OF THE HOMELESS POPULATION ON CENSUS NIGHT

	2006
Boarding houses	21 596
SAAP (emergency shelter or transitional accommodation)	19 849

Friends and relatives	46 856
Improvised dwellings, sleepers out	16 375
Total	104 676

Source: Counting the Homeless, 2006, Pub. No 2050.0

TABLE 2: types of homeless HOUSEHOLDS	
	2006
	%
Single person	76
Couple only	14
Family with children	10

Source: Counting the Homeless, 2006, Pub. No. 2050.0

TABLE3: INDIGENOUS AND NON-INDIGENOUS PEOPLE IN DIFFERENT SEGMENTS OF THE HOMELESS POPULATION					
	Boarding house	Friends or relatives	SAAP (emergency shelter or transitional accommodation)	Improvised dwellings	All
	%	%	%	%	%
Non-Indigenous	94.2	96.2	80.3	84.2	90.9
Indigenous	5.8	3.8	19.7	15.8	9.1
	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Counting the Homeless, 2006, Pub. No. 2050.0

TABLE 4: AGE BREAKDOWN OF HOMELESS POPULATION, 2006	
	%
Under12	12
12 – 18	21
19 – 24	10
25 -34	15
35 – 44	13
45 – 54	12
55 – 64	10
65 or older	7

Source: Counting the Homeless, 2006, Pub. No. 2050.0

TABLE 5: SEX AND AGE OF HOMELESS									
	Under 12 years	12 – 18 years	19 – 24 years	25 – 34 years	35 – 44 years	45 – 54 years	55 – 64 years	65 years and over	All
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Males	52	46	53	57	63	64	61	64	56
Females	48	54	47	43	37	36	39	36	44
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Counting the Homeless, 2006, Pub. No. 2050.0

TABLE 6: SEX BY DIFFERENT SEGMENTS OF THE POPULATION					
	Boarding house	Friends or relatives	SAAP (emergency shelter or transitional accommodation)	Improvised dwellings	All
	%	%	%	%	
Male	72	52	47	60	56
Female	28	48	53	40	44
	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Counting the Homeless, 2006, Pub. No. 2050.0

6.3 Which states have more homeless people?

The publication Counting the Homeless, 2006 (cat. no. 2050.0) identified 104 676 as being Primary Homeless in Australian States and Territories (Table 7).

You have been allocated \$100 million to assist with the development of services to the Primary Homeless. Your task is to decide how this money should be allocated to each state and territory in Australia.

- Using Table 7, ask students to calculate the percentage of homeless people in each State and Territory and complete column (b). New South Wales has been completed already.
- Study the values in Table 7 below and discuss how the money should be allocated to each state and territory.

TABLE 7: COMPARISON OF PRIMARY HOMELESS PEOPLE BY STATE AND TERRITORY.			
	Number of Homeless	% of Total Homeless	Rate of Homelessness per 10,000 population

	People (a)	People for each state or territory (b)	(c)
NSW	27 374	26.2	42
Victoria	20 511		42
Queensland	26 782		69
WA	13 391		68
SA	7 962		53
Tasmania	2 507		53
NT	4 785		248
ACT	1 364		42
Total	104 676	100	

Source: Counting the Homeless, 2006, Pub.no. 2050.0

6.4 How do our capital cities compare?

The number of homeless provided in Table 8 is a count of persons defined as 'Primary Homeless' only. These are people without conventional accommodation (living on the streets, in deserted buildings, improvised dwellings, in parks, etc.). The data provided does not include persons in boarding houses or who are temporarily homeless.

The data is provided for the Statistical Local Areas (SLAs) at the heart of Australia's capital cities. If desired, the quickest way to view the boundaries of these areas is to select Census QuickStats for the SLA's identified in the Table 8 below.

TABLE 8: COMPARISON OF PRIMARY HOMELESS IN CENTRE OF aUSTRALIA'S CAPITAL CITIES, CENSUS NIGHT, 8TH AUGUST 2006.					
	No. Primary Homeless (a)	SLA Area km ²	No. Primary Homeless per km ² (b)	No. Primary Homeless per 10 000 usual residents (c)	No. Primary Homeless per 10 000 enumerated persons (d)
105057201 Sydney (C) - Inner	84	4.2	20.00	38	23
205054601 Melbourne (C) - Inner	55	1.9	28.95	47	25
305011143 Brisbane City - Inner	65	0.7	92.86	239	104
405150070 Adelaide (C)	135	15.6	8.65	81	59

505057081 Perth (C) - Inner	125	1.8	69.44	1158	256
605052811 Hobart (C) - Inner	19	0.6	31.67	417	181
705051018 Darwin City - Inner	18	2.6	6.92	072	029
805051449 Canberra City	35	1.5	23.33	484	192
Total	536				

Source: 2006 Census of Population and Housing, Customised Data Report for Statistical Local Areas

Compare the statistics provided on primary homelessness in Australia's capital cities (Table 8).

Divide the class into groups of 4 students. Ask each member of the group to create a graph using one of the columns (a-d) in Table 8

(a) Number of primary homeless,

(b) Primary homeless per square kilometre

(c) Primary homeless per 10 000 persons usually resident in the inner city on Census night

(d) Primary homeless per 10 000 persons enumerated on census night in the inner city

1. On completion, ask students to compare their graphs, and explain the variations observed.

2. Ask each group to decide which measure is best for comparing Primary Homeless in Australia's capital cities. (The graphs are provided in the answer section of this activity)

3. Identify the organisations which may be interested in the number of homeless in the inner city?

6.5 What are conditions like for homeless people?

The activity may be developed to incorporate a film review on the topic of 'The Homeless' using a variation of *Dr. Edward de Bono's Six Thinking Hats®*. Review the video before commencing this activity. Choose a video or DVD appropriate for the year level e.g. The Oasis (www.theoasismovie.com.au)

The hats are provided as a way of focussing attention during the showing of the film and discussing the material within it.

1. Explain the purpose of the hats:

- White hat - Data, information or statistics
- Red hat – Feelings, hunches or gut reactions
- Black hat - Judgement, devils advocate or why something may not work
- Yellow hat – Optimism, positive thinking

- Green hat – Creativity, solutions, possibilities, new ideas
 - Blue hat – Used to manage the thinking process, thinking about thinking
2. Allocate a coloured hat to each member of the class or allow students to choose their preferred hat colour.
 3. As students view the film they are to make their own notes focussed solely on information related to the colour of their hat.
 4. At the end of the film, ask students to share their observations based upon the colours of their hats. These observations may be collated by the class or included in a written response appropriate to the video.

6.6 What can be done?

1. Identify services which assist homeless persons in your State or Territory.
2. Ask the students to research organisations dedicated to assisting the homeless.
3. Summarise the results of the research in a table showing the agency, its focus and the actions it has in place to assist homeless people.

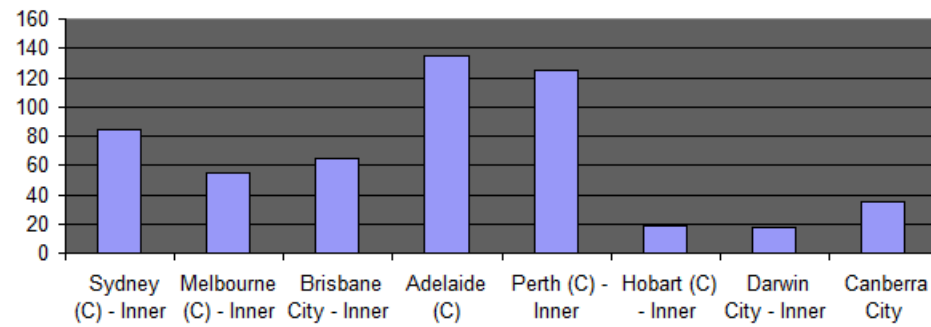
Answers

TABLE 7: COMPARISON OF PRIMARY HOMELESS PEOPLE BY STATE AND TERRITORY.			
	Number of Homeless People	% of Total Homeless People for each state or territory.	Rate of Homelessness per 10,000 population
NSW	27 374	26.2	42
Victoria	20 511	19.9	42
Queensland	26 782	25.6	69
WA	13 391	12.8	68
SA	7 962	7.6	53
Tasmania	2 507	2.4	53
NT	4 785	4.6	248
ACT	1 364	1.3	42
Total	104 676	100%	

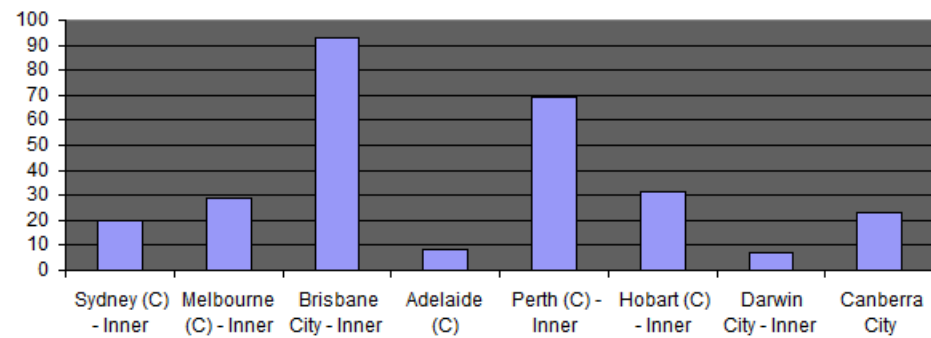
Source: : Counting the Homeless, 2006, Catalogue no. 2050.0

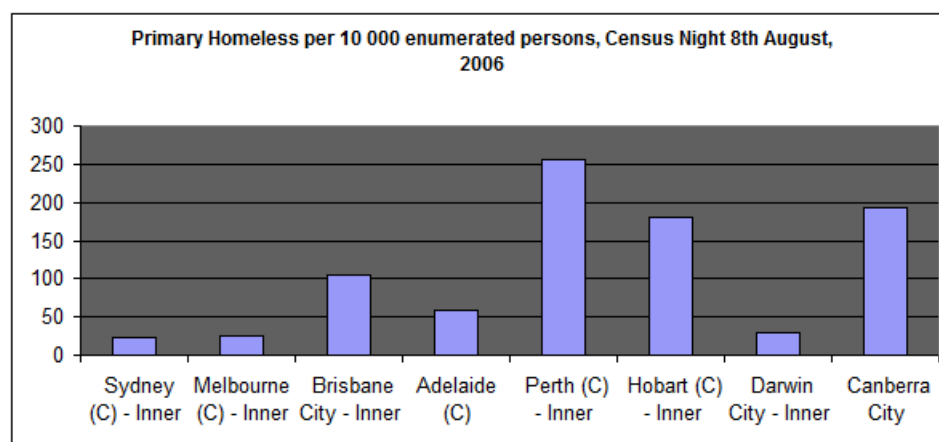
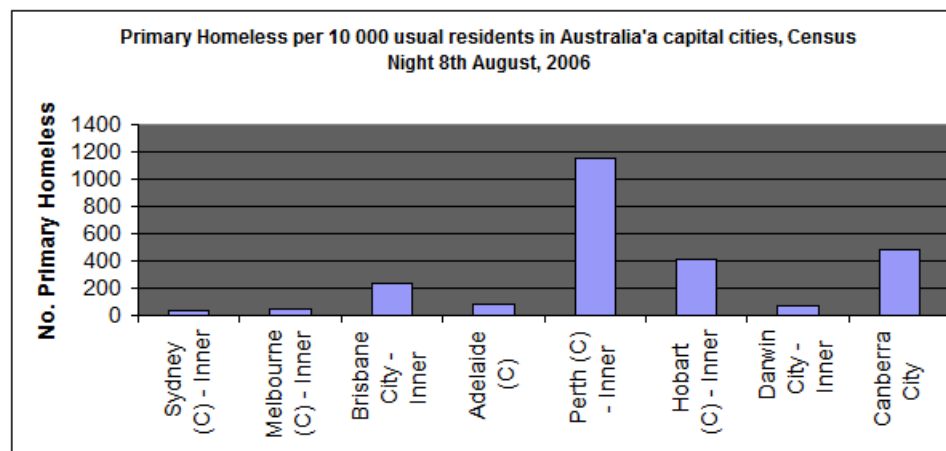
Graphs to Compare the Homeless in the centre (SLAs) of Australian Capital Cities.

Primary Homeless in centre of Australia's capital cities, Census Night 8th August, 2006



Primary Homeless per km² in centre of Australia's capital cities, Census Night 8th August, 2006





Source: 2006 Census of Population and Housing, Customised Data Report for Statistical Local Areas.

Glossary

Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP)

Secondary homelessness also includes people residing temporarily with other households because they have no accommodation of their own and people staying in boarding houses on a short-term basis, operationally defined as 12 weeks or less.

Primary homelessness

Includes all people without conventional accommodation, such as people living on the streets, sleeping in parks, squatting in derelict buildings, or using cars or railway carriages for temporary shelter.

Secondary homelessness:

Includes people who move frequently from one form of temporary shelter to another. On census night, it includes all people staying in emergency or transitional accommodation provided under the Supported Accommodation Assistant Program.

Statistical Local Area (SLA)

The Statistical Local area is part of the Australian Standard Geographical Classification(ASGC). SLAs are Local Government Areas or parts thereof.

Tertiary homelessness

Refers to people who live in boarding houses on a medium to long-term basis, operationally defined as 13 weeks or longer. They are homeless because their accommodation situation is below the minimum community standard of a small self-contained flat.

References

(Note: Links to ABS publications are to the most recent release. Previous releases can be accessed by selecting the 'Past & Future Releases' tab.)

[Australian Standard Geographic Classification](#) (ASGC), (cat. no. 1216.0)

Census of Population and Housing, [Census Community Profile Series\(Time Series\)](#) and [QuickStats](#), 2006.

[Counting the Homeless](#), 2006, Pub. 2050.0

Dr. Edward De Bono 6 Thinking Hats, <http://www.debonothinkingsystems.com/tools/6hats.htm>

The Oasis, Shark Island Production Films, <http://www.theoasismovie.com.au/>

Downloads

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 RTF file, 985 KB)

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